

Washington News

The president has sent to the senate the nomination of members of the new court of customs appeals authorized under the Payne tariff law. To be presiding judge, Alfred C. Coxe, at present United States circuit judge on the second circuit. To be associate judges, William H. Hunt, at present United States judge for the district of Montana; James F. Smith, formerly governor-general of the Philippine islands, former judge of the supreme court of the Philip-

pine islands and former collector of customs in the Philippines; O. M. Barber of Vermont, a prominent lawyer of that state; Marion Devries, at present chairman of the board of general appraisers at New York.

A joint resolution introduced in the senate by Senator Jones and in the house by Mr. Humphrey, both of Washington, provided for a committee of twelve to investigate secretary of the Interior Ballinger. Six of these are to be appointed by Vice President Sherman and six by Speaker Cannon.

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THE COMMONER
Lincoln, Neb.

Senator Elkins of West Virginia and Senator Crawford of South Dakota each introduced a resolution providing for a congressional inquiry into the increased cost of living. Senator Elkins' resolution calls for an "unexhaustive investigation" into the matter by a committee of five senators while Senator Crawford calls upon the secretary of commerce and labor for figures showing the increases in wholesale and retail prices during the last decade and the causes for such increases.

The Mann Bill, providing for the administration of the Panama Canal Zone and centralizing the government thereof in the president of the United States, passed the house by a vote of 119 to 102. The democrats vigorously fought the measure. An Associated Press dispatch says: "The attitude of the majority and minority on this section may be best described by a question propounded to Representative Townsend of Michigan by Representative Garrett of Tennessee and by Mr. Townsend's reply: 'Do you believe that congress has any power under the constitution to confer legislative power on the president?' asked Mr. Garret. 'Ordinarily, no,' replied Mr. Townsend. 'In this instance, yes. We are in Panama digging a canal and it is necessary for the president to have the power to make rules and regulations for the government of the zone while that work is in progress.' Representative Mann, author of the bill, claimed that precedent for a delegation of such power in the executive was found in similar action by democratic congresses at the time of the Louisiana purchase and again when Florida was ceded to the United States by Spain. Defending his party, Representative Harrison of New York said that disturbed internal conditions made such action necessary, but that despotic government in those territories was continued no longer than was found necessary to establish local government. Speeches were made by Representatives Underwood of Alabama, Hardwick of Georgia and others on the opposition to this section. A motion of Mr. Hardwick to strike out the section entirely was lost by the close vote of 85 to 90."

Representative Richardson of Alabama, on behalf of three democratic members of the house committee on interstate and foreign commerce, has filed a minority report to Representative Mann's "white slave" bill. Concerning that minority report, the Associated report says: "The minority takes no exception to the provisions relative to the transportation of alien women and girls in foreign commerce, and their admission to American ports is not controverted, but the chief objection to the bill is that 'under the exclusive authority that congress has under the commerce clause of the constitution, incidentally or otherwise, congress can not in the exercise of police power punish citizens of the states for violating a federal statute made under the pretense of regulating morals and suppressing evils, which in the strictest and most literal sense, is an affair which belongs to the states. It is to be regretted, they say, that the assertion of these fundamental principles, federal and state, arises in a matter relating to the life of degradation that follows the loss of virtue by a girl or woman, native or alien. Such a question necessarily involves the great principle of the extent of the authority of the federal government to exercise police jurisdiction within the states."

With a view of making international arbitration judicial in fact as well as in theory, Secretary Knox has addressed a circular to the powers proposing that the jurisdiction of the international prize court, authorized in 1907 by The Hague peace conference, be extended so as to make it a court of justice. This note was dated October 18, 1909. No responses has been received. A statement explaining the contents of the note and the reasons the proposal was made was given out by Secretary Knox. The international prize court was to be composed of fifteen judges, eight of whom were to be chosen from the largest maritime countries, Germany, Austria-Hungary, France, Great Britain, Italy, Japan and the United States, and were to serve six years. The other judges were to be chosen from the remaining nations, and were to sit for a longer or shorter period as determined by the maritime standing of their respective countries.

Edwin V. Morgan, American minister to Cuba, has retired and has returned to this country.

President Taft is looking forward to a trip to Alaska during the coming spring.

In a discussion in the house it developed that the revenue cutter service had been used extensively in an effort to locate John Jacob Astor's yacht, Nourmahal, reported lost in West Indian waters several weeks ago. The house adopted a resolution calling upon the treasury department to state how much this search had cost the government.

An Associated Press dispatch under date of January 9, follows: "Secretary Ballinger, of the interior department, suspended from office Superintendent John D. Benedict, of the five civilized tribes of Oklahoma, and three supervisors as the result of an investigation which has disclosed 'a disgraceful condition,' affecting the material and moral welfare of the schools. As a result of the investigation which the interior department has been carrying on for some time, and which will be continued, other officials of the Indian service may suffer a like fate to that of Superintendent Benedict and the three supervisors suspended today. The investigation which resulted in today's action was entered into because of various reports regarding the department here, charging the officials already suspended, as well as others, with activities which it was thought were improper for government employees. The suspended supervisors are Calvin Hallard, of the Choctaw schools at McAlister, Frederick H. Umbholtz, of the Chickasaw schools, Ardmore, and Walter Falwell, of the Creek schools at Muskogee." Benedict denies the charges and says that "politics" is responsible for his dismissal.

Former Secretary of the Interior James R. Garfield publicly lauded

Gifford Pinchot and declared that "his departure from the national service is one of the greatest losses the government has sustained in recent years."

Isaac Finkelstein of New York put in considerable time digging a tunnel in order to connect with a bank and jewelry house. He thought in this way he could tap the treasury boxes of the two institutions. The tunnel caved in and Finkelstein lost his life. His body was recovered by a party of workers.

Colonel Michael Shaughnessey, at one time United States marshal in Mississippi and who served in a New York regiment during the civil war, died at Salt Lake City, aged 63 years.

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